

# WORKFORCE HORIZONS

## Planning Tomorrow's Workforce Today

Louisiana Department of Civil Service

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### THE STATE OF IOWA'S COMPETENCY GUIDE

If you want to learn how to develop, validate and use competencies for workforce planning or other human resources purposes, you can find an excellent guide on the state of [Iowa's workforce planning website](#). The Iowa Department of Administrative Services has one of the most comprehensive competency guides around that should be a model for other states. It outlines a process for defining and developing competencies through job analysis (or job profiling as it is sometimes called). It defines competencies as:

*“Observable and measurable knowledge, abilities, skills and behaviors that must be applied to achieve results aligned with the goals of the organization.”*

### WORKFORCE PLANNING MAXIM OF THE DAY

*“Knowledge has to be improved, challenged, and increased constantly, or it vanishes.” – Peter Drucker*

Competencies are divided into three types: 1) core competencies required by all positions in an organization, 2) common competencies required by a specific organizational unit or type of position in addition to core competencies, and 3) a position competency that is specific to a particular position.

The Competency Guide provides a description of how to do a job analysis, a detailed discussion of a variety of methods for developing competency lists as well as rating scales and methods of evaluating the importance of the competency (e.g., is it essential, is it a competency that distinguishes between high performers and average or low performers, is it necessary at entry into the job or can it be gained through training after hiring). It also includes scales for determining the level of proficiency at which a competency is needed. The job analysis and rating scales provide a method of validating the use of the competencies for human resources processes.

The Competency Guide includes many examples of forms, rating scales, benchmark definitions for points on the scales, etc. It is accompanied by a Competency Library defining a general set of competencies used in the Iowa State system. These are based on four occupational study databases developed by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management.

The Iowa Competency Guide closes with a discussion of how to use competencies in the human resources management process including:

- Job design-developing Position Description Questionnaire
- Recruitment-vacancy announcements
- Hiring and Screening applicants
  - Minimum Qualifications and Selective Certification
  - Initial Screens
  - Questionnaires
  - Determining who to interview
  - Interview Questions
  - Reference Checks
- Orientation
- Development plans
- Individual performance plans

To link directly to the competency guide go to [Competency Guide](#).

## **JOB PROSPECTS FOR 2009 COLLEGE GRADS**

According to CareerBuilder's Annual College Job Forecast<sup>1</sup> released April 15, 2009, the class of 2009 faces a more competitive job market this year because of the economic downturn. Only 43% of employers plan to hire recent college graduates in 2009. This is a decrease from

56% in 2008 and 79% in 2007. The forecast is based on a survey of private sector employers and does not include government employers. However, this downturn in the private sector market will likely result in more new college grads applying for government jobs.

For those private sector employers that do plan to hire recent college grads in 2009, 21% said they will decrease starting salaries offered for 2009 compared to what was offered in 2008. 68% intend to keep initial salary offers the same as last year. The breakdown for starting salaries (annual) that will be offered to new college grads is as follows:

More than \$50,000 – 14% of employers  
\$40,000 to \$50,000 – 17% of employers  
\$30,000 to \$40,000 – 33% of employers  
Less than \$30,000 – 36% of employers

College grads can improve their chances of being hired by avoiding the most common mistakes made during the interview/application process. Below are some common mistakes employers reported in the survey:

- ✓ Not dressing appropriately for the interview
- ✓ Acting bored or cocky
- ✓ Not turning off cell-phones or electronic devices during the interview
- ✓ Coming to the interview with no knowledge of the company
- ✓ Spamming employers with the same resume and/or cover letter
- ✓ Failure to remove unprofessional photos/content on social networking pages, web pages, blogs, etc.

<sup>1</sup> "CareerBuilder's Annual College Job Forecast Finds New College Graduates Will Have to Compete

*Much Harder for Jobs,"* [http://www.stockwatch.com/newsit/newsit\\_newsit.aspx?bid=U-pCG98630-U:MSFT-2009...](http://www.stockwatch.com/newsit/newsit_newsit.aspx?bid=U-pCG98630-U:MSFT-2009...) 4/27/2009

## U. S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS DATA ON HIRING

Nationwide, in February 2009

- 4.8 million workers were laid off or voluntarily chose to leave their jobs
- 4.3 million workers were hired
  - Manufacturers hired 249,000
  - Construction companies hired 366,000
  - Retailers hired 536,000

Only 1.5% of workers voluntarily quit their jobs in February. This is the lowest number since the Bureau of Labor Statistics started collecting those numbers eight years ago. Workers appear to be clinging to the jobs they have because of the economy. They also appear to be less willing to move or relocate to accept a new job than in the past, possibly due to difficulties in selling their homes.

There are more applicants now as well. There are 4 1/3 unemployed persons for every job vacancy.

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

*"A man does what he must - in spite of personal consequences, in spite of obstacles and dangers and pressures - and that is the basis of all human morality."* – **John F. Kennedy**

### CREDITS

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Purpose: The purpose of the Workforce Horizons is to educate readers about workforce planning issues and best practices, inform them about upcoming Civil Service workshops and training related to workforce planning and to provide practical job aids to assist agencies with workforce planning.

Comments and submissions: We welcome questions about workforce planning and suggestions for improvements to the newsletter as well as submissions of articles about what your agency is doing in workforce planning. Questions and comments should be sent to the editor.

Current and Back Issues may be viewed by going to the workforce planning portal of the Civil Service web page at [www.civilservice.louisiana.gov](http://www.civilservice.louisiana.gov)